Crete Public Schools

Crete Public Schools serves 1,500 students from a wide range of socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds. The parochial school, St. James Elementary with 110 students, will also be a part of the project. The focus area of this proposal is to fully integrate technology to create five 21st century classrooms in different grade levels across the district to enhance learning and to serve as pilots for future expansions of technology. Science and technical writing will be the targeted content areas. Achievement data show that gaps exist between various subgroups. Graduation rates are declining and students are not engaged in their learning. Teachers have not had significant professional development in technology for eight years. Various research studies suggest that delivering content in online format or with web-based simulation sifts better with the way students learn in the 21st century.

Three outcomes for students and staff will be accomplished with this project:

OU TCOME 1. By the end of the project students will demonstrate increased understanding of science and language arts concepts through the use of various forms of technology as shown by decreasing the number of students in the bottom two quartiles on Stanford 10.

OUTCOME 2. By the end of the project students will demonstrate the use of the Internet and at least two other digital resources to research and present at least one science project.

OUTCOME 3. By the end of the project 21st Century classroom teachers will demonstrate proficiency in the use of technology in the classroom including digital resources, Angel/Moodle content management software, interactive whiteboards, simulations, and virtual activity software to improve technical writing and science learning and, in turn, train other teachers.

This project supports all Nebraska's goals for use of these Title IID funds – especially the first goal – to fully integrate technology into the curricula and instruction to enhance teaching and learning. Goals of the No Child Left Behind Act, ISTE National Technology Standards for Teachers and Students, and Crete's own Technology Plan are also supported.

Technology will be used to provide expanded simulations, experimentation, and lab opportunities in science classes and improve collaboration, technical writing, and research skills in writing and language arts. Each classroom will be equipped with a dedicated set of laptop computers, student response devises, wireless Internet access, an interactive whiteboard system with LCD projector, digital camera, networked printer and science simulation software or licenses to access simulations on the web. Each teacher will receive professional development to be the trainer in one technology (Angel content management software, use of interactive whiteboards, since simulations, iSAFE Internet safety curriculum, student response systems). These teachers will then train other staff members. The teachers will also spend time in the summer integrating technology into their curriculum. Extended learning time, training for after school staff, and access to tech resources will assist in closing the achievement gap and improve learning for students with special needs.

This project will be conducted through a partnership that will involve cooperation between the Crete Public Schools, St. James Elementary, Educational Service Unity #6, Crete Police Department, Henry Doorly Zoo, and UNL Extension Service in Saline County. Outcomes achieved through this grant will enable all these agencies to increase the use of digital resources.